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ZNR UUUUU ZZH

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0304

INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7293

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1316

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6635

RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2811

RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1229

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2632

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 002976

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PGOV PTER PK

SUBJECT: RED MOSQUE - SITREP JULY 9, 1600 LOCAL

REF: ISLAMABAD 2960 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: There has been no major change in the Red Mosque situation since Post's July 7 report (reftel), but the government appears to be preparing for a final siege.

Security forces and militants exchanged sporadic gunfire on July 8 and 9, and mosque leader Ghazi continues to refuse to surrender. All Mission staff are safe and accounted for, and except for the G6 sector, which remains under curfew, the city is operating normally. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Media reported that on Sunday President Musharraf issued a go-ahead order for security forces to "act decisively." Government sources notified post that a major operation would take place Sunday night, but a plan to storm the girls' dorm next to the mosque was stopped when security forces discovered it was booby-trapped. The Army continues to conduct aerial surveillance of the mosque. Militants fatally shot a Pakistan Special Forces Commander during an abortive raid attempt by authorities on Sunday morning, and later on the same day several militants were arrested while trying to escape the mosque.

¶3. (SBU) Groups of religious leaders continue to urge Ghazi to release women and children still inside the compound. Select religious leaders who recently met with Ghazi will see Prime Minister Aziz today. Washington may wish to review reporting in other channels.

PATTERSON